The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Roland Robbins, Lincoln, Mass., president; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding, State University College, Geneseo, New York, secretary-treasurer. Membership: $2.00 a year; life membership, $25.00.

BULLETIN NINETY-ONE

SPRING, 1965

THE 1965 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society will be held in the First Parish Church of Concord at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 10th.

The guest speaker will be Herbert Cahoon, Curator of Autograph Manuscripts, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, who will speak on the Thoreau manuscripts.

Roland Robbins will deliver the presidential address following the business meeting.

Luncheon for a limited number of people will be served at noon. Those wishing to make reservations should write in advance to Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, 22 Elm Street, Concord, Massachusetts. Following luncheon there will be a question and answer period - please fill out the question cards before the morning meeting.

For the afternoon, at 3 o'clock there will be the dedication of the National Historic Site plaque at Walden Pond by the National Park Service. At 4 p.m. there will be a walk of the old roads near Thoreau's house site at Walden Pond, including the bounds of the Emerson land on which Thoreau built his house and had his bean field.

In the gallery of the Concord Free Public Library will be an exhibit of many of the more than 1200 pictures taken by Herbert W. Gleason of Thoreau Country. The pictures in the 1906 edition of Thoreau's Journals were taken from this collection. Frank Bramley has spent many months on this project.

Roland Robbins' reproduction of Thoreau's Walden House built at his home in Lincoln will be open for inspection.

The evening meeting will include a new "Sounds of Thoreau's Journal" tape-recording compiled by Edwin Way Teale, Roland Robbins, and David Dean, and an illustrated lecture "The Flowers Of Thoreau" by Frank Bramley. Bramley's talk is a rare treat of superb closeup color pictures revealing hithertofore unseen beauty even in the smallest of flowers and plants.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 1965 ELECTION. . . .

The nominating committee (Benjamin Gronewold, Herbert Uhlig, and Leonard Kleinfeld, chairman) submit the following nominations for offices to be filled at the annual meeting: President, Gladys Hosmer; President-elect, George Russell Rady; Vice-president, Robert Needham; Secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding; Members of the executive committee for three years, Mrs. Caleb Wheeler and George Russell Rady; Member of the executive committee to complete Mr. Needham's unexpired term, Sidney Clark.

Brother Juniper

"Tell Thoreau to stop communing with nature and get to work."

Reprinted with the permission of the artist, F. Mac.

THOREAU'S THEME GRADES by Edwin Moser

The often repeated notion that Thoreau received the grade of "C" on most of his college themes is incorrect. The matter is of some importance because manuscripts not written for Thoreau's courses in Rhetoric have been falsely identified as assigned themes on the evidence of a penciled c that appears on the back of them.(1) (Actually, from the careful records that Professor Channing kept, preserved in the Archives of Harvard University, we know the title of every theme as assigned to Thoreau's class.)

In an unpublished letter in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, written by F. B. Sanborn to Charles Goodspeed on September 11, 1908, we learn the meaning of the mysterious penciled c: it was Sanborn's symbol to indicate to himself that he had made a copy of the essay and could sell the manuscript.

It has been known for some time that (over)

IF THIS PARAGRAPH IS MARKED WITH RED CRAYON, IT MEANS THAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE. RENEWAL--$2.00 A YEAR. IF YOU WISH THE CONVENIENCE, YOU MAY RENEW FOR ANY NUMBER OF YEARS AT THE SAME TIME. LIFE MEMBERSHIP--$25.

Channing graded themes numerically, from 0 to 48.(2) The average of all of Thoreau's theme grades is 28, which was about average, or a little above, for his class. This is the only accurate statement that can be made about the quality of Thoreau's theme grades.

Nor do we know what grade an individual theme received. This, too, is a matter of some importance. (Canby, for example, implies that Channing graded low when given unorthodox ideas.(3)) Given all the information we have about Thoreau's grades we should know what each theme received. We know the precise day, month, and year that each theme was assigned. We know the same for the time they were due. We know the date of the "week ending" for which (or on which?) the grades were entered in the term books. Yet it seems impossible to correlate these facts, for no matter what correlating scheme is used a theme that was written is held as not having been written. I have tested such possibilities as assuming the dates of the grades correspond to the date assigned; to the date due; to a date one week later, when they were corrected and returned; to a correction two, three, and four weeks later. I have done the same assuming the dates of the grades were dates for entering the grades, working it all out for one, two, or three weeks later. I have worked out numerous schemes whereby Channing graded sophomore papers the day received; junior papers, a week later; senior papers, two weeks later; and all possible such combinations. Yet in every instance there was no possible correlation.

It would be valuable to have such a correlation, and possibly someone else may attempt it. But my own conclusion is that the problem is insoluable.

[1]See, for example, Kenneth Walter Cameron, The Transcendentalists and Minerva (Hartford, Conn.: Transcendental Books, 1958), I, 150 and I, 170.

[2]The Term Books with Thoreau's grades have been preserved in the Archives of Harvard University. They have been reproduced, along with surviving bi-weekly Department Reports and other material in Kenneth Walter Cameron's "Chronology of Thoreau's Harvard Years," ESQ, No. 15 (II Quarter, 1959).

[3]See Henry Seidel Canby, Thoreau (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939), both pp. 41-42 and 53.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . WH

Brown, Theodore M. "Thoreau's Prophetic Architectural Program." New England Quarterly, XXXVIII (March, 1965), 3-20.

Byron, Gilbert. "Henry Thoreau: Botanist-Poet," CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, Dec. [?], 1964.

Cahen, Jacques-Fernand. LA LITERATURE AMERICAINE. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961. HDT, pp. 27-29.

Cameron, Kenneth Walter. EMERSON'S WORKSHOP. Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1965. I, 222 shows a quitclaim deed give to John Thoreau Sr., by Julius Mr. Smith of Concord. I, 230-244, gives a "List of Persons Qualified to Vote in Concord, At the Election, 1856," includes names of both Henry D. and John Thoreau. Apparently used to forcast the vote and HDT is checked under both voting for Freemont and doubtful.

Drinnon, Richard. "Thoreau y su concepto del hombre probo y justo." RECONSTRUIR, XXXII (Sept., 1964), 34-42 [Buenos Aires, Argentina]. Trans. into Spanish from MASS. REVIEW of 1962.

Eifert, Virginia S. "The Botanist, Thoreau" in TALL TREES AND FAR HORIZONS: ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES OF EARLY BOTANISTS IN AMERICA. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1965. pp. 239-256. $5.00. A very readable account of Thoreau's botanical interests as displayed on his 1857 trip to Maine, although oddly enough no use was made of T's much ampler botanical notes in his JOURNAL. It does however convey T's enthusiasm for botany and other chapters in the book give some exciting accounts of the discoveries by other early American botanists.

Figueira, Gaston. "Revision de Thoreau." EL DIA (supplemento 1671), [Montevideo, Uruguay], Jan. 31, 1965. Text in Spanish

Fussell, Edwin. "Henry David Thoreau" and "Thoreau's Unwritten Epic" in FRONTIER: AMERICAN LITERATURE AND THE AMERICAN WEST. Princeton University Press, 1965, $8.50. Pp. 175-231, 327-350. A complex, difficult and often very obscure study of T's use of the West, the frontier, and the Indian as metaphor in his various works. Fussell has some important things to say but it is a struggle to find out what they are. He approaches T. with no sense of humor and thus, it seems to me, often misses T's point.

Groff, Richard. THOREAU AND THE PROPHETIC TRADITION. Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Co. [Box 32112, El Sereno Station], 1961. 41pp. A brief but very sympathetic and understanding discussion of Thoreau's philosophy, placing him in the tradition of the great prophets of the past.

Hollis, C. Carroll. "A New England Outpost: As Revealed in Some Unpublished Letters of Emerson, Parker, and Alcott to Ainsworth Spofford." New England Quarterly, XXXVIII (March, 1965), 65-85. Contains information on Spofford's early interest in Thoreau.

Hovde, Carl F. "Literary Materials in Thoreau's A WEEK." PMLA, LXXX (March, 1965), 76-83.

Johnson, Thomas M. AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY DAVID THOREAU. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1964. $15. A 111-frame filmstrip of beautiful color photographs of scenes from Thoreau country with an accompanying narration on a recording both discussing and quoting Thoreau. It should make an excellent introduction to Thoreau for high school and early college classes. The text of the recording is also provided in a pamphlet.

Kasegawa, Koh. "Emerson, Thoreau, Melville." AOYAMA JOURNAL OF GENERAL EDUCATION [Tokyo], V (Nov. 1964), 15-24. Text in Japanese but abstract in English.

Milch, Robert J. WALDEN OR LIFE IN THE WOODS AND ON THE DUTY OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE: NOTES. Lincoln, Neb.: Cliff's N tes, 1965, 50pp. A crib.

Moldenhauer, Joseph. "The Extra-vagant Maneuver: Paradox in WALDEN," GRADUATE JOURNAL, VI (Winter, 1964), 132-146.

Nyren, Karl. A DIFFERENT DRUMMER. Lexington, Mass.: Sanderline Films, 1965. A ten-minute, 16mm. sound film, $75.00.

Porte, Joel. "Thoreau on Love." UNIVERSITY REVIEW, XXXI (Dec. 1964), 111-116.

Sherlock, Chesla C. "Walden, the Rendezvous of Thoreau," in HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS. Des Moines: Meredith, 1926, I, 205-216.

Thoreau, Henry David. PLAN OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S ESTATE IN CONCORD MASS: SURVEYED BY HENRY D. THOREAU. AUG. 20, 1860. New York: Grolier Club, 1964. Facsimile reproduction.

Williams, Donald L. "T.W.Higginson on Thoreau and Maine." COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY, VII (March, 1965), 29-32.

Yamasaki, Tokihiko. "The Meaning of 'Civil' in 'Civil Disobedience,'" QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LAW AND POLITICS [Osaka City University, Japan], LXXVII (March, 1965), Text in Japanese.

Zardoya, Concha. HISTORIA DE LA LITERATURE NORTEAMERICANA. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Labor, 1956. Includes section on Thoreau.

THOREAU AND PURSLANE
by Paul O. Williams

Among the foods Thoreau discusses in the "Economy" chapter of Walden is purslane: "I have made a satisfactory dinner, satisfactory on several accounts, simply off a dish of purslane (Portulaca oleracea) which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled and salted. I give the Latin on account of the savoriness of the trivial name." (Variorum Walden, ed. Walter Harding (New York, 1962), p. 67.)

Common purslane, which apparently was brought from India to Europe as a salad green, has become a world-wide weed, especially hard to control because its seeds can mature after the plant has been uprooted and can germinate after years of dormancy. It is a low, crawling plant, with reddish, fleshy stems and leaves, and small, and small, yellow flowers. The leaves appear on the stem or on short stalks, in fours.

Thoreau, who knew "th' ambrosia of the Gods's a weed on earth," was never one to waste good food, as do millions of gardeners who weed out their bushels of purslane. One must not think Thoreau was being unduly Spartan by using it as a pot-herb. Apparently, such usage of purslane is known in many areas. Boiled it makes a delicious green, crisp and rather bland until salt is added to bring out the flavor. Thoreau seems to be playing with the word "account," repeating it to bring out that one of the values a thing offers is in knowing about it.

THE RHETORIC OF WALDEN: Abstract of a Columbia University Ph.D. Dissertation, 1964, by Joseph J. Moldenhauer.

In his 1854 Journal, Thoreau named paradox, wordplay, and the incorporation of proverbs and other commonplaces as "faults" of his style. Yet these are, in fact, the dominant devices of "extravagance" which he practiced in all his compositions. In this critical study of Walden, Thoreau's major stylistic techniques are related both to the book's artistic structure and to Transcendental theories, strategies, and goals of expression. These determinants are regarded as complementary; the persuasive intentions and the literary design are accounted for by a method of rhetorical analysis, proposed in Chapter I, which proceeds on the following assumptions: that the speaker or narrative persona of the literary work may be distinguished from the author, and the fictional audience from the reader; that within the dramatic situation, the speaker exercises persuasive appeals upon the fictional audience, his "rhetoric" being synonymous with "style"; and that style may be analyzed in the terms of academic rhetoric without slighting the work's aesthetic integrity.

Chapter II deals mainly with Thoreau's language as a response to the Transcendental emphases upon poetic and moral perception and upon the persuasive revelation of this vision to an unimaginative audience. Thoreau seeks to impose his extraordinary perspective--the higher awareness of the Reason--upon an audience whose habitual responses are the lower ones of the Understanding. His major rhetorical procedures are dissociative: he turns the world of common sense upside-down with forceful puns, paradoxes, ironic commonplaces, and hyperbolic conceits, and so "translates" the audience, raising its vision from accustomed frames of reference to a heightened perceptiveness in which Transcendental attitudes become intelligible.

Next, these polemical ends are related to the plot, themes, symbolism, and characterizations of Walden, which conform to the criteria of comedy. Thoreau as narrator, the witty hero, debates with his "desperate" neighbors, the comic humours. The hero's attributes are youth, freedom, creativity, sanity, spontaneity, and an anti-commercial simplicity; the characteristics of "the mass of men" whom he confronts are age, confinement, irrationality, self-destructiveness, convention, and materialistic complexity. It is in terms of this rhetorical situation of argument and exhortation that the style of Walden can best be understood; and in keeping with the pattern of comedy, Thoreau not only challenges his antagonists' version of reality, but invites them to share his own values and to participate in his triumph over social repression.

The specific techniques of persuasion upon which this study concentrates in the three remaining chapters resemble one another in form and function. In each, the narrator manipulates the verbal conventions of his neighbors in order to distinguish critically between their experience (upon which these conventions are founded) and his own more harmonious experience. In the paradoxes, Thoreau's superficially false and self-contradictory utterances disclose fundamental truths. He applies the language of his neighbors' interests (e.g., words relevant to commerce) to his own anti-conventional activities, or he qualifies the vocabulary of their social values with terms of universal aversion. In the wordplays, Thoreau frustrates conventional expectations about the sense of a word by evoking opposed meanings through manipulations of context. With proverbs and familiar Biblical, literary, and mythological allusions, Thoreau makes significant statements in a manner which makes them appear at first glance trite; he employs familiar forms to express unexpected and radical judgments. All three dominant techniques, indeed, serve as vehicles of judgment, whether negative (attacks upon the public values of the audience) or affirmative (celebrations of the narrator's own values). In the first half of Walden, a negative rhetoric predominates; in the second, Thoreau's judgments and appeals are increasingly affirmative.

Formally documented checklists of wordplays and commonplaces in Walden are appended to the analytical chapters.

BACK PUBLICATIONS . . . .

The following back publications of the Thoreau Society are available from the secretary for 50¢ each: Bulletins 12-15, 18, 21-63, 65, 66, 69, 70, 72-83, 85-90 and Booklets 3,5,8,10,14,15, and the reprint of Bulletins 1-9 together. The following booklets are available at $1.00 each: 6,7,9,16, 18, 19, and 20.

NOTES AND QUERIES . . . .

Kenneth Harber (70 Lanark Crescent, Rochester, N.Y.) has volunteered to supervise a Thoreau book exchange. If you will notify him of Thoreau books you would like to purchase or duplicate Thoreau books that you are willing to sell or exchange, he will make up a list to be published in the next bulletin. Place your own valuations on the books you would like to sell. The whole transaction will be non-profit.

The following have aided in the gathering of information for this bulletin--H.Adel,T.Bailey, M.Campbell,K.Cameron,J.Donovan,A.Bussewitz,L. Hoffman,C.Hoagland,D.Kamen-Kaye,L.Lane,V.Munoz, J.Morine,P.Oehser,E.Perry,E.Rice,H.VanFleet, W. White, and D.Williams. Please keep the secretary informed of new items of interest as they appear.

Enclosed with this bulletin is a piece of "Thoreau Money" printed and distributed by the Committee for Non-Violent Action .

James Reismeyer points out that the $20 Dover edition of Thoreau's complete journals can be ordered from Books by Mail (218 Fulton St., New York 7, N. Y.) for only $14.30, postpaid.

Charles Tweedy (99 Kidder Ave., Somerville, Mass.) asks if anyone can identify the following quotation from Thoreau: "Do not speak for other men; speak for yourself. Though you should only speak to one kindred mind in all time, though you should not speak to one, but only utter aloud, that you may the more completely realize and live in the idea, which contains the reason of your life, that you may build yourself up to the height of your conceptions, that you may remember your Creator in the days of your youth and justify His ways to men. . . "

President Johnson quoted Thoreau briefly in his "Atlantic Community" address of Dec. 3, 1964 at Georgetown University.

Among recent lectures on Thoreau--L.E.Bowling on "Thoreau's Social Criticism as Poetry" at the Modern Language Association in New York last December; Charles Anderson on "Thoreau--The Magic Circle of Walden" at Oslo University in Norway on June 21, 1964; Carl Bode on "Thoreau and the Sense of the Future" at the Univ. of Keele in England on April 3, 1964; Joseph Schiffman on "Thoreau--Indian Attitudes in Action" at the Seminar on American Institutions and Culture at Ootacamund, Madras, India on May 5, 1964.

It has been proposed to establish a North American Hall of Fame and Museum for Conservation at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and Thoreau has already been nominated for inclusion.

Mr. Laurence Richardson of Concord calls our attention to the following entry he found in Simon Brown's manuscript journal for Sept. 20, 1860: "Our annual Agricultural Festival. It began to rain at 8 o'clock and rained through most of the forenoon. No cattle were exhibited this year on account of the disease. The show of horses and Fruits was very fine. The Address was by Mr. Thoreau, President Felton of Harvard College, Levi Stockbridge of South Hadley and Mr. Hudson, of Lexington spoke well." Brown, former lieutenant Governor of Mass., was a Concord resident.

I DREAMED I WAS YOUR VALENTINE IN MY HENRY THOREAU SWEATSHIRT.

The above Valentine is distributed by Hallmark Contemporary Cards and is reproduced here with their permission.